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SERVICE STATISTICS

Task Force on Service Statistics

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Statistical Commission the report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Service Statistics (convener: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)), which is contained in the annex. The report is transmitted to the Commission in accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its special session. 1/

Notes

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1994, Supplement No.9 (E/1994/29), para. 1.

* E/CN.3/1995/1.

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Annex

REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON SERVICE STATISTICS

1. The Inter-Agency Task Force on Service Statistics was established by the Statistical Commission at its special session (New York, 11-15 April 1994) on the recommendation of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities, as endorsed by the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is the convener. Task Force members are the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), OECD and the Statistical Office of the European Community (Eurostat). The Task Force has agreed that regular membership of this inter-secretariat body should be confined to established international institutions whose representatives are in a position to make commitments on their behalf. It has also been agreed that experts who are not officials of international institutions may be invited to attend meetings of the Task Force and that the Task Force will liaise with informal groups, such as the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics.

2. The terms of reference of the Task Force were confirmed by the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination at its seventeenth session (E/CN.3/1995/2, para. 25 (a)). The terms of reference had been developed by the Task Force and the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities (E/CN.3/1995/2, para. 23); they are continued in the appendix.

3. At its first meeting (7 and 8 July 1994), the Task Force considered (a) its terms of reference, clarifying paragraph 2 of those terms; (b) its membership and working methods; and (c) its initial work programme. The Task Force decided to compile an inventory of activities and requirements in the service statistics area based on a questionnaire sent to participants. The Task Force also organized cooperation in conducting a training course on trade in services (Beijing, October 1994).

4. At its second meeting (19 and 20 January 1995), the Task Force definitively adopted its terms of reference and discussed the preliminary version of the inventory mentioned in paragraph 3 above, deciding to complete it. In addition, a framework will be drafted for the statistical requirements of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Task Force reviewed the reports on the above-mentioned training course and drew short and long-term conclusions for future technical assistance. It then made a preliminary assessment of the establishment of a world-wide trade-in-services yearbook, which it considered to be highly desirable. There was an initial exchange of views on trade statistics in the context of globalization. The Task Force also decided to consider the establishment of a trade-in-services manual. Lastly, the Task Force decided that its third meeting would be held on 30 and 31 May 1995.

5. The minutes of the first and second meetings will be before the Commission as background documents and the convener will provide an updated oral report.

Appendix

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE ON SERVICE STATISTICS

1. The work of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Service Statistics takes place in the context of the following general objectives:

(a) To strengthen cooperation among international organizations in the area of service statistics, and liaise with other agencies or groups involved with service statistics;

(b) To promote the development of international standards, systems and classifications for service statistics;

(c) To improve the availability, quality and international comparability of service statistics collected at the international level;

(d) To facilitate the provision of technical assistance in service statistics to developing countries.

2. In the first instance, the work of the Task Force will focus on the statistical requirements of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). a/

3. The Inter-Agency Task Force on Service Statistics will serve as a forum for communication about requirements and resources and will offer an opportunity for rationalizing efforts.

4. Work on other kinds of service statistics, such as the statistics of production and employment in service industries, will depend on the findings of the investigation being conducted by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat (UNSTAT), into the best way to achieve the general objectives described in paragraph 1 above, with particular reference to developing countries and countries in transition; the work of the Task Force will also depend on the recommendations of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities and the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination, based on the report to be prepared by UNSTAT.

5. The present terms of reference take account of the views expressed at the preliminary consultation (Paris, 20 May 1994), the twenty-eighth session of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities (Rome, 8-10 June 1994) and the first meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Service Statistics (Paris, 7-8 July 1994).

Notes

a/ Trade in services is defined in GATS, article 1, para. 2 (see GATT(092)/R2), as follows:

> For the purposes of this Agreement, trade in services is defined as the supply of a service:
>
> (a) From the territory of one member into the territory of any other Member;
>
> (b) In the territory of one member to the service consumer of any other member;
>
> (c) By a service supplier of one member, through commercial presence in the territory of any other member;
>
> (d) By a service supplier of one member, through presence of natural persons of a member in the territory of any other member.